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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /032 W
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R 312255Z JAN 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7135
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0648

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EC PINR
SUBJ: NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALIST FRONT NOMINATES SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN

REF: QUITO 0570

1. ON JANUARY 30, AS WAS EXPECTED (SEE REFTEL) THE LIBERAL PARTY FORMALLY WITHDREW FROM THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONALIST FRONT (NCF) AS QUITO MAYOR SIXTO DURAN-BALLEN WAS OFFICIALLY NOMINATED AS THE FRONT'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. CONTRARY TO LIBERAL PARTY DIRECTOR FRANCISCO HUERTA'S EXPECTATION, THE SOCIALIST PARTY REMAINED IN THE NCF AND DRAFTED A PROGRESSIVE PLATFORM THAT WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE FRONT'S MEMBERS. THE ONLY GROUP TO LEAVE WITH THE LIBERALS WAS THE INSIGNIFICANT POPULAR ACTION FRONT.

2. DURAN-BALLEN, IN ACCEPTING THE NCF'S NOMINATION, BECOMES THE FOURTH ANNOUNCED CANDIDATE AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BE REGARDED AS A SERIOUS ELECTORAL CHALLENGER TO CURRENT FRONT-RUNNER ASSAD BUCARAM. THE NCF SPOKESMAN, FRANCISCO SALAZAR (CONSERVATIVE PARTY), INDICATED THAT THE FRONT
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WILL SELECT ITS VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE SHORTLY.

3. COMMENT: DURAN-BALLEN'S NOMINATION BY THE NCF, COMBINED WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY'S WITHDRAWAL, UNITES THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM FROM RIGHT TO CENTER-RIGHT. THE SOCIALISTS, A SIGNIFICANT THOUGH NUMERICALLY SMALL PARTY, ARE THE ONLY GROUP WHOSE IDEOLOGY IS INCONSISTENT WITH

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THE MAJORITY OF THE NCF'S MEMBERSHIP. THEIR PRESENCE
IN THE COALITION CAN OBSTENSIBLY JUSTIFY THE FRONT'S CLAIM TO A
BROAD IDEOLOGICAL BASE. THE PROGRESSIVE PLATFORM AND THE
SOCIALISTS' MEMBERSHIP IN THE NCF SEEM MERE WINDOW
DRESSING AND MOST ASTUTE POLITICAL OBSERVERS WILL
NOTE THE PRESENCE IN THE FRONT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
POLITICAL GROUPS OF THE RIGHT, PARTICULARLY THE CONSERVATIVE
PARTY.
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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